

Submission on the Powerhouse Ultimo Revitalisation – Amended Application (SSD-67588459)

Please classify this submission as **100% negative** towards the Powerhouse Museum's amended plan.

This amended application shows no significant changes from the previous version, ignoring major objections. The process feels exhausting and frustrating, with only minor landscaping/cosmetic adjustments that do not address the core issues.

Key Concerns:

1. **Reduced Exhibition Space:** The museum's exhibition area will shrink to less than 25% of the original size.
2. **Environmental Control Issues:** Large open spaces cannot adequately manage the diverse environmental needs for materials like paper, fabric, and metals. The museum's capability is being downgraded.
3. **Generic Facilities:** The design transforms the museum into a series of generic halls, unsuitable for scientific exhibits, which require specialized infrastructure.
4. **Sale of Harwood Building:** The plan includes building a surplus freight dock to facilitate the sale of the Harwood building. And moving back of house activities into the exhibition building for the same purpose.
5. **Long-term Viability:** The redesign undermines the museum's purpose and future.

Additional Issues:

- The much-improved MacArthur Street facade is still visually unappealing and lacks cohesion. Improvements like decorative features are needed. The shapes do not seem to have a cohesive form that appeals to the eye. It's raggedy. The large brick wall could do with a large decorative frieze, or perhaps some decorative features that work catalytically with the brick backdrop. The rough brick wall is interesting, but not strong enough to work alone. It looks boring and incomplete. Unclear public access to the roof garden raises concerns about exclusivity.
- The plan fails to mention necessary infrastructure for modern scientific exhibitions. This is expensive to retrofit and should be built in at the design stage.
- Accessibility improvements, particularly near the Exhibition Centre tram stop, are lacking. The route from Haymarket is steep and narrow, making it difficult for those with disabilities. Access from the Haymarket tram stop is up a steep and lengthy ramp that is difficult to use without an electric wheelchair. The pedestrian route from the Haymarket tram stop is also dangerously narrow at one point. Using a public transport bus (501) to Harris Street is even more difficult.
- Limited parking options further complicate access. Practically there is no paid car park. So far as I am aware the tiny car park on the other side of the Harwood building is usually occupied by staff and I have never seen spaces available. I was not even aware the public could use it, and I live very close to it. On street parking is very rarely available during the day. In my opinion it would be a mistake to concrete in the lift pit near the Exhibition Centre tram stop (mentioned in transport plan) as it could be useful one day. The Exhibition Centre tram stop offers the potential for a very short, nearly level disabled access point to the museum. The large amount of the

budget being spent on the loading dock would be better spent on better access for the disabled, very young and very old.

Recommendations:

Instead of the current plan, taxpayer funds should be directed towards:

1. Expanding exhibition space so more of the extensive Powerhouse collection can be on display. With creative architecture and possibly expansion into the Harwood Building.
2. Enhancing transportation and signage for accessibility. This is currently very poor.
3. Upgrading environmental controls for exhibits.
4. Showcasing cutting-edge developments in science and technology in new building elements and innovative exhibits.
5. Improving research facilities to attract top talent. So facilitating ongoing exhibition excellence.
6. Supporting science education and fostering enthusiasm for science among young visitors.

Recently I attended a community tea in Ultimo. The conversation turned from crochet classes to lacemaking and on to a fabulous display of lace that used to be in the Powerhouse museum. Most of us remembered it fondly. It was one of many displays on simultaneously on a variety of topics. It used to be possible to visit the museum and spend hours in one small nook. You could visit every day and be inspired by a different area if you wanted to. The museum had depth and was inspirational.

What is being designed will only be able to display a small number of generic objects at a time. People will visit less often for shorter periods of time. It will be a museum in name only built by people who don't value museums or science. For people who don't visit museums (except for cocktail networking). Superficial.

Conclusion:

This plan risks transforming the museum into a generic event space, rather than a vibrant hub for education and inspiration. It represents a failure to invest in the museum's potential and a move towards commodification rather than cultural enrichment. Our funding should aim to modernize and enhance the museum, not prepare it for a staged sale.

Best Wishes

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